

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT UPDATE

January 1999

Responders train at correctional facility

Approaches to training are as different from each other as the trainers who apply them. One important principle, however, is to start with the basics, establish a solid foundation of successful exercises and build increasingly complex drills from this. At least that's the philosophy that was applied at a mock exercise this past summer in Lunenburg County.

The scenario was a hazmat incident in which a 1,000-gallon gasoline spill from a delivery tanker threatened local waterways and presented fire and health hazards. The exercise site was an above-ground storage facility located at the Lunenburg Correctional Center.

"That was one of the unique aspects of the exercise, holding it at a prison," said exercise facilitator and VDES Hazmat Officer Steve De Lisi. "One of our goals was to establish a better working relation-

ship between local emergency services and the correctional facility. The other important goal was to try out some ideas in terms of more effective ways to conduct exercises."

The drill involved both state and local agencies and area businesses, which supplied props free of charge. De Lisi brought in local government officials to cement their investment in the process. The county administrator, the mayor and the town manager of Victoria were involved from the beginning and were present the day of the drill to watch it unfold over three different sites at the center. "I think it's important to involve government officials in the planning process all the way through, if possible," said De Lisi. "We also wanted to let them see what their people could do. I think they were very impressed and developed a

greater respect for their emergency services providers."

Other ideas De Lisi tested included providing intensive training well before the drill to make sure the first responders understood their roles and responsibilities. De Lisi explained the "upfront" training helped reinforce current skills and practices and emphasized first responder safety.

The exercise was also repeated in the afternoon to reinforce lessons learned from the morning drill. "We sacrificed complexity for the ability to effectively apply a smaller-scale incident for the learning experience," said De Lisi. "By doing it twice and having the players switch roles, we were able to apply lessons learned immediately while they were fresh in peoples' minds."

A third aspect of the training was the additional planning challenges arising from the prison location. De Lisi explained that two sets of plans were developed — one for the exercise itself and one for an exercise shutdown in the event a real-life emergency occurred at the facility. Both plans were practiced.

De Lisi pointed out the upfront training was invaluable. "Everyone had better expectations of their performances, there were less errors during the drill and the upfront training built up the confidence of

(Continued on page 2)

New year brings Y2K challenges

Message from the State Coordinator

by Michael Cline

Happy New Year before the Year 2000. I hope it will be a most fruitful one for all of you and for all of us together. Toward this end, I encourage you to take full advantage of the year ahead to ensure you are ready for any Y2K issues that may arise. While the systems that are potentially at risk from Y2K-related failures may not be our responsibility — be they government or private sector — responding to the consequences of their breakdowns certainly will be.

And if the infrastructure problems that could occur are as dire as some have predicted, they will be on a scale well beyond that of a typical flood or tornado response. At best, resources to deal with computer issues and infrastructure failures will be scarce next January. At worst, they will simply be unavailable in the short term.

If you have not already, I strongly suggest you meet with your key local program chiefs and key infrastructure providers to make sure everyone is Y2K compliant. Once you are satisfied that they are, assume at least one major system will fail anyway and plan accordingly. Although time is growing short, a concerted effort will still enable us to be ready for whatever the next New Year brings.

Inside

- ☐ **1998 wraps up for Technological Hazards - p. 3**
- ☐ **EENET expands offerings - p. 3**
- ☐ **Chesterfield County's EEC offers classes for dispatchers - p. 4**

Correctional Facility

(Continued from page 1) the players," he said. "The perception might be that the drill was so well orchestrated, you couldn't fail, but we wanted everyone to succeed."

For the Department of Corrections prison staff, the payback came about a month after the exercise when a bulldozer ruptured an underground pipeline adjacent to where the simulated spill occurred. The line led to a

10,000-gallon propane storage tank, which is the main source of fuel for the facility.

While continuing to maintain security, prison officials evacuated a vehicle check-point, a critically situated guard tower and a nearby warehouse. Food service was shut down briefly but not long enough to arouse the ire of the 1,100 inmates of the facility.

Institutional Safety Specialist Delbert Garrett credits the rapid and efficient response to the facility's participation in the mock drill. He said, "We

have to handle situations like this well because we want to be a good neighbor to our community. Because of everything we practiced that particular day, this response was second nature to us. We had to do, in real-life time, what we had practiced a month earlier. We already had a good working relationship with VDES and our fire and EMS services. The drill helped enhance our working relationship with them."

Garrett observed similar training is being planned for

other correctional facilities around the state. "We have proposed that our other state institutions (in the Department of Corrections) train and drill in the same way, involving their communities and using expertise from VDES. The community was very impressed with us and with the fire department and rescue squad's preparedness for such an emergency."

For information, call Steve De Lisi at 804/897-6572, e-mail sdelisi.des@state.va.us

Y2K summit targets local government

Is your community prepared to survive disruptions to vital services such as public safety, health and transportation because of Year 2000 problems? If you don't address these issues, the consequences might be disastrous. For example, your school doors may not open but your jail doors could, your E911 system may fail, your water and sewage treatment plants might shut down and your utilities services could be interrupted.

An important videoconference for local government on Year 2000 computer problems will be held at sites across the state on Jan. 22, from 1-2:30 p.m. Titled "Local Government Leadership Summit on the Year 2000," this community preparedness program is hosted by the Virginia Century Date Change Initiative Project Office.

In collaboration with the Virginia Municipal League, the Virginia Association of Counties, the Virginia Association of Local Elected Constitutional Officers, and other state and local organizations, the conference is designed to address the potential Y2K issues local government leadership may face over the coming year.

To register, contact Cleo Rehmer at 804/786-1434 (ext. 3015), e-mail: crehmer@cdci.state.va.us or call VML liaison Steve Craig at 804/643-0247 (ext. 3326).

Procedures outlined for digging in an emergency

The "Miss Utility" One Call Center worked actively with VDES staff to design an Emergency Underground Utility Notification Procedure that would expedite approval to dig in an emergency situation. The process is:

Virginia Department of Emergency Services Notification Procedure*

In an emergency during which underground digging is required, contact:

Miss Utility in the Northern Virginia/Eastern Shore region ... 800/257-7777
Miss Utility for all other locations in Virginia 800/552-7001

Inform the operator that you are using the emergency notification procedure and provide the following information:

- ☐ The exact location of the incident (include ADC map grids, if possible)
- ☐ What action you need to take (digging, driving ground rods, etc.)
- ☐ The best route(s) to your location
- ☐ The location of the command post, if one has been established
- ☐ A point of contact at the scene of the emergency
- ☐ A number at which the point of contact can be reached

The operator will inform the point of contact at the site that the request has been made. Ask the operator to notify the locator who will be dispatched to the site to call the point of contact, confirm that the person received the message and provide the person with an estimated time of arrival.

**An exemption to the "Underground Utility Damage Prevention Act," which normally requires a 48-hour notification to dig, is granted during emergency situations. An emergency situation is defined as "a sudden or unexpected occurrence involving a clear and imminent danger, demanding immediate action to prevent or mitigate loss of — or damage to — life, health, property or essential public services." The exemption requires that all reasonable precautions have been taken to protect underground utility lines.*

Reasonable precautions include efforts to determine the presence of underground utilities based on above-ground indicators such as utility locator signs, utility poles (with obvious connections to underground lines), manhole covers, valve boxes, transformer pads/pedestals and newly developed or refurbished areas.

HAZ MAT

Terrorism threat and WMD focus for hazmat in coming year

By Greg Britt
VDES Hazmat Field Manager

1 998 has come and gone, and once again we try to assess the progress, lessons learned, and damage from the previous year. In very recent history, we have immeasurably advanced in every imaginable area of life. This is particularly true in the world of hazardous materials emergency response.

Much has changed since the early 1980s when VDES first began responding to hazardous materials emergencies. At that time, only one person in the agency was assigned to hazmat response and this person covered the entire state.

Planning, training, and remediation were not issues in those days. Almost none of the equipment we used was designed for emergency response, much less hazmat response.

There were no computer software programs for hazmat. As a matter of fact, the agency hazmat person used no computer at all. There were no NFPA standards or OSHA 1910.120 for guidance, yet our program survived and has continued to thrive for almost two decades.

Things have vastly improved for everyone in the field because of great advances in the areas of technology, planning, training and remediation. Thanks to NFPA standards and OSHA 1910.120, we now have guidance in the areas of

training and response.

To illustrate how these improvements have made a difference: in 1987, when the agency began collecting statistics for hazmat, we received 642 notifications. We now average over 2,000 a year, yet many of our hazmat teams are experiencing fewer calls. Some of the reasons for both the increase in notifications and the decrease in calls can be attributed to greater public awareness of hazardous materials emergencies, vastly improved notification and response procedures and far more systematic hazmat training in both government and private industry.

What does the future hold for hazardous materials response? Many of today's issues are focused on terrorism and weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Because WMD responses will be handled much like hazmat incidents, we are becoming increasingly involved in this arena along with our federal government partners. Much time, money, and other resources have been spent on terrorism preparedness issues. While all these issues have not been resolved or even addressed, we are better informed and better prepared for such incidents than we were two or three years ago.

Our hazmat teams will continue to serve as resources for medical facilities, technical
(Continued at top of page)

rescue teams, public utilities, and industries. But because of the great progress we have made in our field, we may never again have to respond to incidents such as those that occurred in Waverly, Tennessee, and Miamisburg, Ohio. Far more likely is the threat of a terrorist/WMD incident that could be much

worse than these incidents. We pray this does not happen in Virginia, but we must keep our guard up.

As we have grown because of our past successes and learned from our past mistakes, let us continue to do so with every year that passes. God bless you and have a safe year.

EENET adds Internet programming

Want the latest EENET broadcast, but don't have access to a satellite dish? You can now watch EENET on your computer. Several of the broadcasts are available through Internet video streaming both live and for up to 30 days following the satellite broadcast.

Other services EENET is offering for 1999 include a number of both new and familiar monthly series that touch on topics near and dear to public safety people. These series, starting in January and airing every Wednesday at 2 p.m., are scheduled as follows:

EENET for Trainers *(First Wednesday)*

Designed especially for state and local emergency management and emergency services trainers, this series features nationally recognized speakers at the National Emergency Training Center. They'll be addressing a variety of topics relevant to trainers.

Disaster Operations *(Second and fifth Wednesdays)*

The spectrum of disaster operations is covered in these broadcasts. From floods and earthquakes, to hazmat and terrorists incidents, the series addresses such topics as management issues and lessons learned. Most of these

programs are interactive, allowing you to participate and ask questions or share experiences.

National Alert *(Third Wednesday)*

This award-winning video journal continues to showcase exemplary programs across the country as well as the latest in emergency management news. You may want to submit your program for consideration.

Mitigation *(Fourth Wednesday)*

Keep up with ways to mitigate future disaster losses through reduction strategies. With topics such as public awareness campaigns, engineering solutions to help manage local hazards and tips for homeowners from Home and Garden TV, the target audience for this series includes local officials, businesses and other groups as well as emergency managers.

Visit the EENET Web site for the schedule of monthly broadcasts or register to get the latest information sent to your e-mail address. Go to www.fema.gov/emi/eenet.htm.

If you have exemplary programs, ideas, suggestions or lessons learned you'd like to share with EENET viewers, e-mail sue.downin@fema.gov with the details.

Training Calendar

Emergency Management

Emergency Planning Workshop

February 9-11
Richmond

Decision Making and Problem Solving

February 18
Culpeper

Emergency Action Planning for Dams

February 18
Lynchburg
March 4
Stuart

Coordinators' Briefing

February 24-25
Virginia Beach

Principles of Emergency Management

March 2-4
Culpeper

Leadership and Influence

March 9-11
James City County
For information, call the VDES Training Office at 804/897-6557

Reservist Training

Rapid Assessment Workbook

Overview
January 14
Richmond

VEOC Tabletop Exercise I

February 4
Richmond

Reservist Program Orientation

February 17
Richmond
For information, call Lin Saylor at 804/897-6552

Technological Hazards **Hazardous Materials Technician**

April 5-16
Location to be announced

Advanced Hazardous Materials Control

May 10-14
Location to be announced
For information, call Ron Hargrave at 804/897-6573

Search and Rescue **SAR Council**

January 30
Richmond

Managing Search Operations

Part I: March 20-21
Part II: April 16-18
Charlottesville
For information, call Winnie Pennington at 804/674-2422

Conferences

Virginia Emergency Management Conference

March 17-19
Williamsburg
For information, call 757/491-2800

National Hurricane Conference

April 7-9
Orlando
For information, call 850/906-9224

Communications courses offered in Chesterfield

Check out the new selection of classes for emergency communicators offered by Chesterfield County's Emergency Communications Center. These courses are open to all who are interested. Costs for the courses range from \$100-\$279.

911/TTY Training Seminar

April 6 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

The "Americans With Disabilities Act" mandates that all E911 dispatch systems be equipped to handle TDD calls. This one-day seminar offers an understanding of deaf culture and educates dispatchers regarding TDD usage, rules and etiquette.

For information, call Karen Engelhard at 703/273-3722.

(The next three courses are from the Association for Public Safety Communication Institute (APCO) and are offered at the Chesterfield County ECC.)

Communications Center Supervisor Course

April 14-16 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

For the experienced communications supervisor who wants to enhance his or her skills, this course covers the role of the supervisor, liability issues, leadership and employee evaluation, motivation and counseling. Students use the Policy and Procedure Manual from their communications centers for reference.

Communications Training Officers Course

September 8-10 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

If you're a trainer, you might want to investigate this. Topics include EEO policies, interpersonal communications, counseling, civil liability in training, performance evaluation, documentation and more.

Advanced Fire Dispatch Course

November 4-5 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

This course is targeted to dispatchers who deal with fire emergencies. In this two-day class, students will learn the equipment and language of fire services, fire incident call-taking and call-dispatching procedures, the basics of incident command and follow-up for major fire incidents.

For information about the three APCO courses, call 888/272-6911, ext. 260.



10501 Trade Court
Richmond, VA 23236-3713

UPDATE is a monthly publication of the Virginia Department of Emergency Services. For permission to reprint articles in your publication or on the Internet, please call 804/897-6510.

Deputy State Coordinator...Michael Cline
Information Director...Michael J. La Civita
Executive Editor...Janet L. Clements
Managing Editor...Jo A. Hoots

Access the VDES homepage at:
<http://www.vdes.state.va.us>